Gronkowski retires from the NFL

Patriots' tight end from Williamsville revolutionized the game | PAGE B3

THE BUFFALO NEWS

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Barr's summary concludes Mueller report found no Trump-Russia conspiracy

Special counsel declines to settle issue of obstruction, but AG says evidence is lacking

BY MARK MAZZETTI AND KATIE BENNER
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON – The investigation led by Robert Mueller found no evidence that President Trump or any of his aides coordinated with the Russian government's 2016 election interference even though Mueller reached no conclusion about whether the president obstructed justice, according to a summary of the special counsel's key findings made public Sunday by Attorney General William Barr.

Mueller, who spent nearly two years investigating Moscow's determined effort to sabotage the last presidential election, found no conspiracy "despite multiple offers from Russian-affiliated individuals to assist the Trump campaign," Barr wrote in a letter to lawmakers.

Mueller's team drew no conclusions about whether Trump illegally obstructed justice, Barr said, so he made his own decision. The attorney general and his deputy, Rod Rosenstein, determined that the special counsel's investigators had insufficient evidence to establish that the president committed that offense.

He cautioned, however, that Mueller's report states that "while this report does not conclude that the president committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him" on the obstruction of justice issue.

"For each of the relevant actions investigated, the report sets out evidence on both sides of the question and leaves unresolved what the Special Counsel views as 'difficult issues' of law and fact

See **Report** on Page A6

Getty Images

President Trump says Sunday in Florida that he has been completely exonerated.

Inside:

- *TRUMP EXPRESSES TRIUMPH. PAGE A4*
- *OBSTRUCTION IS TANGLED ISSUE. PAGE A5*

ANALYSIS

A cloud over Trump's presidency is lifted

But as he celebrates, other investigations continue; the battle over possible obstruction has only just begun.

BY PETER BAKER
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON – For President Trump, it may have been the best day of his tenure so far. The darkest, most ominous cloud hanging over his presidency was all but lifted Sunday with the release of the special counsel's conclusions, which undercut the threat of impeachment and provided him with a powerful boost for the final 22 months of his term.

There are still other clouds overhead and no one outside the Justice Department has actually read the report by Robert Mueller, the special counsel, which may yet disclose damning information if made public. But the end of the investigation without findings of collusion with Russia fortified the president for the battles to come, including his campaign for re-election.

While critics will still argue about whether Trump tried to obstruct justice, the president quickly claimed vindication and Republican allies pounced on their Democratic colleagues for what they called an unrelenting partisan

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Deals close as deadline nears on state budget

Cuomo, top legislators move past tough talk

BY TOM PRECIOUS
NEWS ALBANY BUREAU CHIEF

ALBANY – It's budget week.

Or, it must be if the more than $170 billion fiscal plan is to be adopted before the state government's new fiscal year starts April 1.

It's been the usual roller coaster ride in the state Capitol.

The week of March 11 saw soaring rhetoric from Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and lawmakers about misplaced priorities, money available to spend, who might face new taxes and an assortment of policy matters on everything from New York City subways to property taxes.

It was, as a downstate newspaper long ago called it, a kabuki dance of a week.

Then, this past week, the tough talk calmed. Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie – both Democrats – retreated behind closed doors to negotiate final terms of the 2019 budget, and when they did pop out they had nice things to say how everything was proceeding in a spirit of fiscal good faith.

As the plan gets final cobbling, here is a look at some of the issues that will have a direct effect on residents across the state.

Education

The funding of public schools is the issue that nearly every lawmaker can agree is the most important item in the budget.

The state will end up planning to spend somewhere in the neighborhood of $28 billion, more than any other component of the budget and second only to the Medicaid health insurance program.

There are two basic issues: How much will the state's 700 districts get in total funding; and who gets what?

The education aid fight is always about geographic politics: downstate suburban versus New York City versus upstate. A new wrinkle in the talks

See **Budget** on Page A2

ncaa tournament

UB's men's and women's teams are both defeated in the second round, the men by Texas Tech and the women by UConn.

DOUBLE DOWNER

Dream over: *Best season in UB men's history ends with uncharacteristic loss* | PAGE B1

Tough to the end: *Bulls star Cierra Dillard shows heart and grit in defeat* | PAGE B12

Photos by Getty Images and USA TODAY Sports

Left, CJ Massinburg of the UB Bulls is stripped of the ball Sunday by Texas Tech's Jarrett Culver. The UB men lost, 78-58. At right, Bulls guard Autumn Jones pauses on the court during the game against the UConn Huskies. The women were defeated, 84-72.

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